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Slide 1

Early in 2005, the Legislature and the Daniels Administration began discussions of creating an Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). During those discussions, it was determined that the Division of Soil Conservation (DSC) should be moved from the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) to the new ISDA. The DSC move set in motion several opportunities but ultimately concluded with a \$3.75M transfer of DSC funds into the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) fund. While no new funds were allocated to the soil conservation initiative the transfer opened up the potential for funding to be more directly targeted toward landowners and SWCDs.

Once this move took place, in July 2005, the Indiana Conservation Partnership (ICP) consisting of the Indiana Department of Agriculture-Division of Soil

Conservation (ISDA-DSC), Indiana Association of Soil and Water (IASWCD), Purdue Cooperative Extension Service (CES) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) came together for three strategic planning sessions that resulted in the new ICP Strategic Plan. From that beginning and as stewards of the Clean Water Indiana (CWI) funding, the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) and ISDA-DSC have considered partner and stakeholder input and guidance in CWI funding administration.

CWI Fund: 2007 Legislature Brings New Opportunity

- \$500K additional funding annually
- The total funding available to the SSCB and ISDA-DSC for soil and water conservation [\\$6.15M](#)
- Once legislative announcement of budget: What was done?
 - The SSCB sub-committees met several times to begin preliminary discussions on how to best utilize this state funding. The SSCB sub-committees began discussing ways to best leverage all CWI funds, provide much needed technical assistance and build SWCD capacity at the same time.

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With the 2007 Legislative session came a new funding allocation of an additional \$500K annually and now there is a new opportunity to be considered.

The total funding available to the SSCB and ISDA-DSC for soil and water conservation [\\$6.15M](#)

Since learning of the new funding, the SSCB sub-committees have met several times to begin preliminary discussions on how to best utilize this state funding. The SSCB sub-committees began discussing ways to best leverage all CWI funds, provide much needed technical assistance and build SWCD capacity at the same time.

CWI Fund: 2007 Legislature Brings New Opportunity

- In their [June meeting](#), the SSCB delayed a decision on the [CWI Grants Program](#) to allow for a 60 day discovery period to collect external input from SWCDs and other stakeholders.
- *It is important to note as you view this presentation, the annual SWCD allocation of \$10,000 (\$92K total) toward any local government match is not part of this discussion. This is a [statutory requirement](#) and will continue regardless of any decisions involving the new funding opportunity.*
- *This provides more opportunity to **leverage funds, build SWCD capacity, and increase technical assistance***

Let's get started.

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In their [June meeting](#), the SSCB delayed a decision on the [CWI Grants Program](#) to allow for a 60 day discovery period to collect external input from SWCDs and other stakeholders.

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With the 2007 Legislature allocated an additional \$500K for soil and water conservation for Indiana this provides more opportunity to **leverage funds, build SWCD capacity, and increase technical assistance**

CWI Fund: Two Year Review

- The additional funds plus the funds already allocated to the Division of Soil and the Clean Water Indiana fund total [\\$6.15M](#)
- [Past Allocations](#) of CWI funds:
20% CREP + 50% SWCDs + 30% Field Staff
- All of these funds, in their different capacities, leverage federal, state and local funds
- Indiana SWCDs manage over [\\$8 million annually](#)

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The additional funds plus the funds already allocated to the Division of Soil and the Clean Water Indiana fund total [\\$6.15M.](#)

Over the past two years, the SSCB and ISDA-DSC have allocated the CWI funds in three areas: the [Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program \(CREP\)](#), [SWCD funding programs](#) and [field staff](#) for technical assistance to landowners. These programs are all examples of allocations that focus directly on increasing conservation practices throughout Indiana and/or building capacity at the SWCD

level. All of these funds, in their different capacities, leverage federal, state and local funds to multiply the benefits throughout Indiana.

One additional factor to keep in mind is that Indiana SWCDs manage over [\\$8 million annually](#). SWCD capacity throughout Indiana to implement conservation is meaningful and needs to be leveraged whenever possible.

CWI Fund: Two Year Review Continued

CREP

- Unfortunately, the lack of funding restricts the [areas for CREP participation](#).
- Only [3 of the 38 8-digit watersheds](#) are included in the program. Landowners in those watersheds have been slow to participate.
- Only a [1/3 of the funding](#) available has been obligated.
- This has required ISDA-DSC to allocate additional staff to the program, recently shifting 14 of 28 Resource Specialist to the project.

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Let's review the past two years in more detail. The CREP for Indiana has been a good program for landowners to become acquainted with the opportunities that conservation initiatives offer. Unfortunately, the lack of funding restricts the [areas for CREP participation](#). [Only 3 of the 38 8-digit watersheds](#) are included in the program. Landowners in those watersheds have been slow to participate. Only a [1/3 of the funding available](#) has been obligated. This slow adoption by

landowners has required ISDA-DSC to allocate additional staff to the program, recently shifting 14 of 28 Resource Specialist to the project.

CWI Fund: Two Year Review Continued

CWI Grants

- Allocated [grants funding](#) a total of approximately \$1M
- This has allowed SWCDs to be innovative with their grants and it also allowed the SSCB to see the potential of SWCDs projects to invest in
- Unfortunately, [1/3 of the Districts](#) (have not received CWI grant funds.
- This fails to treat Districts fairly
- This may not be the best structure to offer technical assistance to Indiana landowners

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[The CWI Grants](#) program has allocated funding to SWCD for special projects in two rounds of around \$500K for a total of approximately \$1M. Grant categories (Regional Technician, Clearinghouse Coordinator, Unique Partnerships and Program Marketing) were developed to break up the opportunities for funding and for projects. These areas allowed SWCDs to be innovative with their grants. It also allowed the SSCB to see the potential of SWCDs and the best projects to invest in.

Unfortunately, 1/3 of the Districts ([Districts shaded gray](#)) have not received [CWI grant funds](#). Additionally 9 Districts received 18% of the funds ([Districts shaded](#)

[blue](#)). 37 Counties received 55% of the funds ([Districts shaded blue and dark green](#)) Distribution among Districts as a whole remains poor. The impact of the grant program fails to treat Districts fairly and ultimately may not be the best structure to offer technical assistance to Indiana landowners.

CWI Fund: Two Year Review Continued

Staffing

- Staffing statewide has been difficult, current staff very talented
- The [RS staff salaries](#) and benefits are taken from the CWI fund
- Equipment such as vehicles, fuel, technical gear and additional training are from the ISDA-DSC fund

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The staffing for technical assistance throughout the state has been difficult. The ISDA-DSC has some exceptional & talented staff and their contribution over the last two years has been meaningful. The RS staff salaries and benefits are included in the [CWI fund](#). The additional staff throughout ISDA-DSC, such as the DSS Team, RSTL Team and the Central Office staff, are all out of the ISDA-DSC fund. Support for the all staff such as vehicles, fuel, equipment and training are taken from the ISDA-DSC fund.

CWI Fund: Two Year Focus

Landowners Deserve and need more!

Focus needs to be:

- **Leveraging**
- **SWCD Capacity**
- **Technical Service**

* All referenced throughout the [ICP Strategic Plan](#) and in [CWI statute](#)

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Knowing that the last two years have been a good demonstration of what is possible, the reality is that landowners deserve and need more. Discussions over the past 10 years around conservation needs in Indiana and again, the expectations of the Indiana Legislature have centered on the following areas: leveraging funds, building SWCD capacity and increasing technical service. All these are referenced throughout the ICP Strategic Plan and in CWI statute

And all are critical to a vibrant and healthy conservation structure. Millions of federal dollars and numerous conservation practices have been left on the table because Indiana hasn't been aggressive toward investing in these critical areas.

CWI Fund: Strategic Focus

Leveraging

- The ability to invest funds and resources in order to capture dedicated funding from federal programs is a form of leveraging
- Every time a landowner receives technical assistance from the SWCD or ISDA-DSC, leveraging has occurred.
- Empowered leveraging is important when programs such as CREP enhance the [financial opportunities for landowners](#).
- ISDA-DSC is creating a web-based tracking site to allow SWCDs and other stakeholders to track their investments of time and money.

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The ability to invest funds and resources in order to capture dedicated funding from federal programs is a form of leveraging. Every time a landowner receives technical assistance from the SWCD or ISDA-DSC, leveraging has occurred. Empowered leveraging is important when programs such as CREP enhance the financial opportunities for landowners. Refer to [CREP Website](#) for more detailed explanations.

Keeping an accounting of all the conservation activities throughout the state is just one way for Indiana to capture additional leveraging opportunities. ISDA-DSC is creating a web-based tracking site to allow SWCDs and other stakeholders to track their investments of time and money. This data will be important as the impacts of conservation are measured and as additional resource needs are determined.

Finally, resource assessments and data management will allow for an ongoing inventory of improvements in Indiana's natural resource quality. This type of information builds awareness and possibly landowner participation.

CWI Fund: Strategic Focus

SWCD Capacity

- Highest priority: Deliver technical assistance, education and local resource management
- Should be empowered by state and local government
- Creates consistent and fair conservation
- Knowledgeable SWCDs offer the best long term potential because they can best address local needs

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SWCD Capacity to deliver technical assistance, education and local resource management is the highest priority in a healthy statewide conservation program. If all SWCDs are empowered and supported by local government, then consistent and fair delivery of conservation will be optimized. Ultimately, knowledgeable and active SWCDs offer the best long term potential because they have authority and ownership of the best system to address local needs.

CWI Fund: Strategic Focus

Technical Service

- Knowledgeable, well equipped and flexible
- Workforce development
 - Advancement opportunities
 - Retention
 - Dynamic career path
- Seamless structure
 - SWCD
 - Watershed
 - DSC
 - All supporting USDA when possible

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Technical service for Indiana landowners should be carried out by professional, creative, knowledgeable, and good dynamic thinkers. In order for Indiana to attract and retain this type of workforce, the conservation program needs to be financed for long term opportunities, with upward mobility and dynamic training programs. The ICP staffing structure should be consistent and should offer opportunities for all staff to work together seamlessly. Programs and red tape rules will always be an issue, so protocols to clarify responsibilities and authority will help to alleviate frustrations.

The three strategic focus areas of leveraging, SWCD capacity, and technical assistance are areas that every partner can participate in either through partnering or through their own staff and resources. Can you imagine the potential if we all start to focus on the same goals?

CWI Fund: Tactical Focus

So if we focus, how do we put it into action?

We will need:

- **CWI Campaign**
- **Communications Plan**
- **User friendly staffing structure & training**
- **Web-based Database**

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So if we focus, how do we put it into action? We need something that is simple, clear and complete. We need something we can talk about, that we all agree to work toward and that we can all have an impact on. Capturing a CWI Campaign will be important over the next several months. This won't happen quickly but will be a campaign that captures all the ICP potential and then also allows landowners, taxpayers and legislators to know what the CWI Campaign is and what the impact will be when we're done.

We'll need a coordinated communications plan one that allows partners to work with each other, another one that educates or updates our customers and finally, one that helps the general citizen understand CWI.

As an individual agency, whether NRCS, ISDA-DSC or SWCD, a dynamic, user friendly staffing structure will be important. Support training modules and training plans for each staffer will help every employee feel empowered, important to the effort and individually fulfilled. Making it fun to be a part of Indiana conservation

initiative will open the doors for a workforce that won't be matched by other states. We'll need to start small with our limited funds but this is an area that can't be tabled until later.

Finally, a web-based database to bring efficiency and effectiveness to our team will be a great touch. Tracking in kind contributions by person, by grant, by SWCD or by agency will bring opportunities and value to all the work that is currently being done. This tracking can help improve the capacity throughout the system. This alone could help increase the members in the partnership and their impact by offering a self service, centralized network.

CWI fund: What's the Potential?

- Available for new opportunity: [\\$1.3?](#)
- *Consistent* delivery structure is important.
- How can such a structure be funded?
- Equal funds to all 92 counties, leaves the initiative watered down.
- SWCD authority and local ownership needed

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With a dynamic, aggressive management plan for the funding available, the SSCB and ISDA-DSC believe funding is adequate for some meaningful investments into a new playing field to support the Districts.

Since the new funding falls short of other states, Indiana still has a limited opportunity for conservation delivery. The SSCB feels that a statewide consistent delivery structure is important. The question is: how can such a structure be funded? Offering equal funds to all 92 counties, leaves the initiative watered down and insignificant for each SWCD. Keeping staffing only at the state level, leaves the SWCD authority and local ownership absent and not really taking advantage of the local leaders and communities. Coordination between the two may be the compromise that is needed.

CWI Fund: New Playing Field

Watershed Opportunity

- Create a formal playing field
- Does not replace Districts or State fields
- Leverage opportunities: inter-agency and federal (319, LARE, USDA)
- Local ownership and direction will be critical for long term security

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One preliminary concept the SSCB is considering would be a watershed approach to technical assistance that would engage and empower Districts.

First, it's important to know that a new playing field doesn't need to replace any field currently available. District, State, Federal and partnerships across the state

will all still be choices and may be best suited for different situations. By creating a playing field for the State funds to reach down more closely to the local level, Districts will have a better and more consistent opportunity to reach out for State funds and for other funds, such as 319, EPA or USDA, that prefer watershed organizations. All resources will be best invested if they are available consistently across the state. Local ownership and direction will be critical for long term security. No funds through CWI will be considered safe unless the impact and investment is found to be important by local landowners and leaders.

CWI Fund: Watershed Concepts

- [23 Watershed Regions](#)
- Watershed Staff
 - 8 DSSs
 - 8 CIT RSTLs
 - 23 Watershed RSs
 - 23 Watershed Agents
- Complete [SWCD Partnering Package](#)

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By taking the 38 8-digit watersheds and grouping them in areas around the state boundary, the [23 watersheds systems](#) contain on average between 700,000 to 1,200,000 acres. Watershed advisory boards comprised of District supervisors, staff and/or local stakeholders such as surveyors or commissioners may give the best direction to the needs and resources available in each area. The make up of the Watershed Advisory Boards will be an important local discussion over the

next few months. SWCD business plans could be compiled into strategic areas for a coordinated watershed plan.

The watershed staff may consist of the current ISDA field staff plus 23 additional positions. These positions will be crafted by the watershed advisory boards, along with guidance from the SSCB and ISDA-DSC for consistency and coordination from watershed to watershed.

This structure is anticipated to help SWCDs and ISDA-DSC in coordination with other agency field staff, such as IDEM Watershed staff and watershed drainage boards that exist in many parts of the state.

Under the Clean Water Indiana program many districts were interested in applying for the [regional technician](#) position, but the challenges with county political boundaries, benefits through the county system, and potential unemployment issues after the 3 years of state funding was over have big hurdles to overcome.

In this watershed approach, SWCDs would still be able to share a long-term regional technician whom they would oversee without the struggles associated with trying to make this a county employee.

CWI Fund: Watershed Concepts

The key is
Flexibility and
Local Ownership

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The keys to this playing field are flexibility and local ownership. Financial support will be important but not as critical as the local direction and administration.

SWCD matching in-kind contributions will be valued by ISDA-DSC and SSCB as very meaningful leverage.

CWI Fund: Watershed Concepts Continued

Local direction will be pivotal

Watershed RSs

- Same duties as CIT RS
- Transitioned to service [Watershed Region](#) vs. [CIT Regions](#)
- Work with CITs in Watershed Region
- CIT RSTL still maintain role on CIT
 - Offering coordination between CIT and Watershed staff

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While [job descriptions](#) will be offered from the SSCB and ISDA-DSC to assure statewide successes, local direction determined by local natural resource and technical needs will be pivotal. Any statewide initiatives, such as nutrient management programs or EQIP, will offer the CWI campaign a strong talking point for legislators and statewide decision makers. Day-to-day direction and local initiatives will also be tools for the staff to turn to for support and watershed impacts.

Efforts to continue to coordinate with NRCS, IDEM, and DNR will not be impaired since technical demand across all programs will be considered. To this end, landowners will ultimately drive the workload. The watershed package staff will be there to serve. Funded and unfunded will be prioritized by watershed and local demands. Urban demands and ag demands will continue to be served in a transparent approach set forth by the Watershed Advisory Boards.

CWI Fund: Watershed Concepts Continued

Additional staffing positions will open up various services including:

- Technical position
- Conservation planning
- Landowner customer service
- Coordination with DC
- Funded program sales & other opportunities
 - LARE, 319, Farm Bill, RC&D, Private, DOE, DOI

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Additional staffing positions will open up various services for the needs of the watershed. Programs such as 319, CREP, LARE and others, will offer funding for the focus that the watershed determines most critical. These positions will be more planning oriented than the resource specialist positions. They will coordinate with District conservationists in the watershed and will also focus on projects that the Watershed Advisory Board determines as a priority.

Understanding landowners' needs, practice systems and standards and surfacing the corresponding funding opportunities will cover much of the responsibilities.

CWI Fund: Watershed Concepts Continued

How do we [pay](#) for this approach?

- Providing 100% of the funding for every District that wants to participate in the watershed approach in lieu of the CWI grants program is one idea.
- Providing partial funding for every District and maintaining the Grants Program is yet another.

The opportunities are endless.

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While an additional \$500K is a substantial amount of funds, how could we [pay](#) for this type of approach? Adding a watershed based approach to the current CWI grants program is one solution to consider. Providing 100% of the funding for every District that wants to participate in the watershed approach in lieu of the CWI grants program is another idea. Providing partial funding for every District and maintaining the Grants Program is yet another. The opportunities are endless.

It is important to keep in mind that factors such as staffing levels, equipment cost fluctuations, cigarette use and [CREP obligations](#) all effect how much funds are available at any given time. This type of budgeting requires a dynamic management approach.

CWI Fund: Next Steps

- This is a preliminary concept
- We want your input!
- Please email your ideas or comments to:
cwicomments@isda.in.gov
- Or mail a letter to:
SSCB
c/o ISDA
101 W Ohio St., Suite 1200
Indianapolis, IN 46204
- We would like to receive all your comments by **July 27, 2007** so that the SSCB will have time to review them prior to their August Meeting.

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As mentioned earlier, this preliminary concept is just one option the SSCB could consider in best utilizing the CWI funding. We are interested in gathering your input and considering any additional ideas you might have.

Please feel free to email your ideas and comments to cwicomments@isda.in.gov

or mail a letter to:

SSCB

c/o ISDA

101 W Ohio St., Suite 1200

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We would like to receive all your written comments by **July 27, 2007** so that the SSCB will have time to review them prior to their August 14th Meeting.